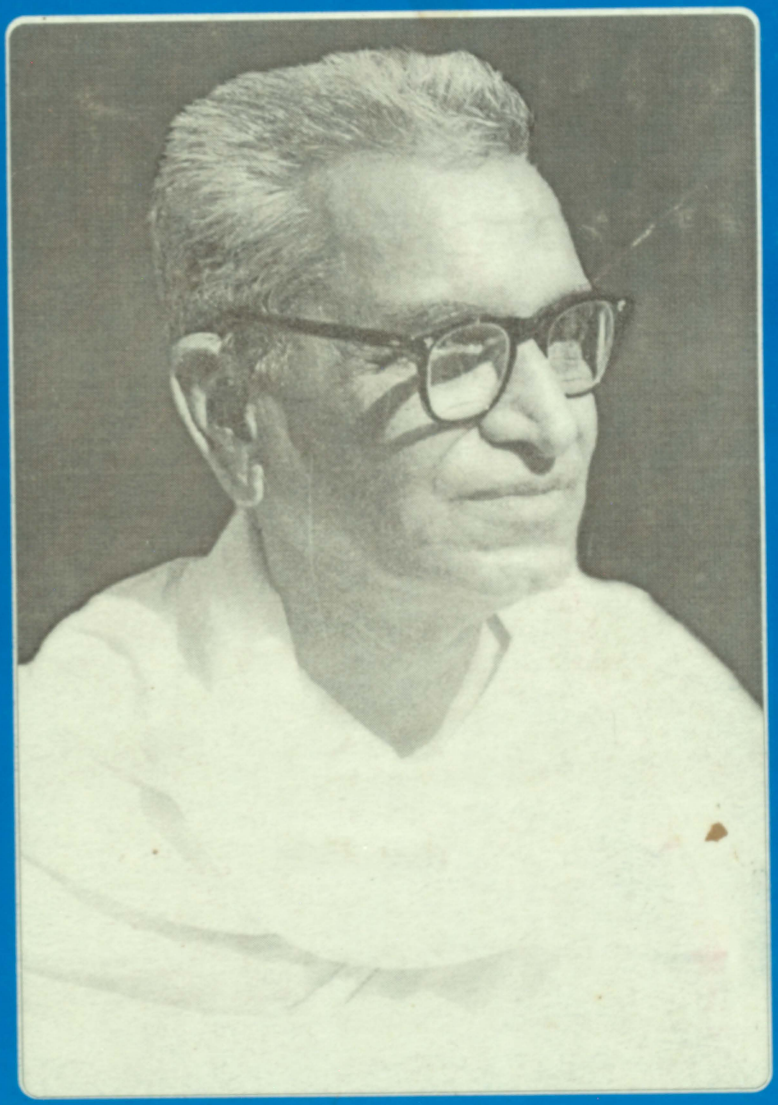
POSITIVE ATHEISM OF GORA



D.D. BANDISTE

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POSITIVE ATHEISM OF GORA

(Fight Against Mental Slavery)

D.D. BANDISTE ,

Atheist Centre, Vijayawada-10.

Positive Atheism of Gora
(Fight Against Mental Slavery)
by **Dr. D.D. BANDISTE**

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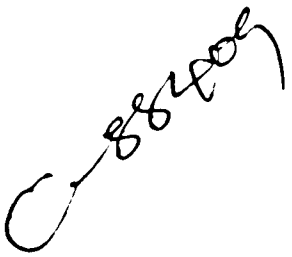

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Positive Atheism of Gora

Perface

I am glad that the Atheist Centre is bringing out my book : 'Positive Atheism of Gora' on the occasion of the Birth Centenary celebrations of its founder, Gora, held on 15th - 17th February 2002. I am thankful to the Centre for this publication.

In this book I do not claim to say anything different from what Gora had said. The subject matter is almost the same and yet I feel that such books should be written again and again by different people at different times. There by even the very subject matter is presented in different light; new arguments and justifications are given; and again objections raised can be answered. Moreover, every author comes from a different background and has his own style. And as is likely one person may appeal to some readers and the other to some others and so on; but ultimately bringing out a large scale cumulative effect.

With the increase of rational enquiry atheism as such is increasing in recent years. In fact, in one of the national seminars on, "Trends in Twentieth Century Indian Philosophy", held in December 1999, I had argued that growing of atheist spirit is a distinct and new trend in philosophical thinking in India in that period. Not only has the number of atheists increased but there have come up numerous varieties of atheism itself crystalized in the thinking of persons like Jawahar Lal Nehru, Jai Prakash Narayana, Narendra Dev, M.N.Roy, Ram Manohar Johia, Devatma, B.R.Ambedkar, the Marxists, Periyar, Gora, N.K. Devaraja and many others. Nehru's following sentence (wording here not an exact reproduction) distinctly represents this growing spirit of atheism. I do not believe in God but I do believe in man. Without belief in God we can live but can we if we do not believe in man ?

Of course a very great lot is yet to be done in fastering atheism in letter, spirit and action. Atheist Centre is proving to be

a laboratory and a valuable guide for all this. My stay at the Centre in July 2000, and my tasks with Sri. Lavanam and Dr. Vijayam have further enriched by understanding of atheism. Additionally. I am obliged to Sri. Lavanam, who inspite of his being extremely busy, has patiently gone through the script and made valuable improvements.

I have written this book with a view that in its own way it will contribute to the growth of rational enquiry in general and bring forth Gora's Positive Atheism in particulars.

D.D. BANDISTE
148, Indrapuri Colony
INDORE 452017 - M.P. (INDIA)

GORA

15th November 1902 - 26th July 1975

I
GORA : THE PERSON AND HIS WORK

Gora, i.e., Goparaju Ramachandra Rao, is a unique example of dedication to one's views on fundamental matters. His vision, his determination, the sacrifies he had to make, the ups and downs he faced in life, the work he accomplished are all unique in many ways. His life is an example of what an individual can do and achieve even single-handedly in a world all against him. Gora was an atheist, rather a militant type of atheist. In the early part of the 20th century, i.e, when Gora started his work, almost every one in his part of the country was a theist and the atmosphere was full of devotions and religious rituals. In such circumstances it was quite brave of Gora to openly preach and live the philosophy of atheism. Hardly any one may have stood, as he did, for a heterodox ideology and hardly any one else would have or could have achieved what he did.

Gora was born in 1902 A.D. in a middle class upper caste Hindu family living in a coastal district of Andhra Pradesh, India. Facilities for higher education then were not easily available. With great difficulty and with assistance from many quarters, he passed M.Sc. in Botany. In spite of such a high degree, for some time he was not employed, as he was not ready to mortgage his self-respect. To make two ends meet he had to perform even menial type of jobs. Finally when he did get a lecturer's job in a college, he could join duties only after borrowing western type of clothes from some well - wishers. Gora was not only a science graduate but unlike many others, he had the scientific outlook too. He had a critical and an open mind. He read avidly and observed minutely. He was of the opinion that proper education is the key to good life. He wanted even the downtrodden castes of the society to live a good life. In pursuance of this philanthropic aim he started going to the slums of the untouchable people and educating them. But the obstacles in this came not only from the upper castes but also from the untouchable persons themselves when they argued that God had fated them to be illiterate, poor and so on and that Gora need not waste his time in trying to educate them. Such and many

the village people gave up superstitious beliefs and customs and also most of the religious rituals. Marriages were performed in a secular fashion. His message gradually spread to the neighbouring localities too. As is the case with any Indian locality, Mudunur and the surroundings were inhabited by numerous castes, sub-castes and even sub-sub-castes of the Hindus; it also had people belonging to other religions. Gora promoted inter-mixing, inter-dining and even inter-marriages among the people, a thing unimaginable then. Whenever he travelled to other villages he used to stay deliberately with a low caste person. With a view to develop humanistic outlook among the people and make them give up their religious boundaries, Gora deliberately organized cosmopolitan tea parties for people belonging to all castes and religions. The parties were so arranged in a rotating manner that the host belonged to a caste or group different from the earlier one. These inter-dinings had always a vegetarian menu. (Beef and pork eating was a separate programme launched by Gora). Naturally, there used to be a huge uproar against Gora for all what he did. But Gora pushed on undaunted. He tried to spread atheism in every possible way.

But he defined atheism in his own peculiar and a novel way. According to him, theism and atheism instead of connoting the existence or non-existence of a spiritual God, connote more the mentality of the holders of these beliefs. A theist prostrates himself before God. Hence, theism means the attitude of mental slavery. And naturally, atheism consists in freeing oneself from such an attitude of mental slavery, and considering oneself a free person, master of one's own destiny. We should not meekly submit to the obnoxious customs or miserable plight but must adopt a rebellious attitude against such social evils like injustice, inequalities, exploitation and so on. Gora flouted ill-omens, lived in houses considered haunted, conducted widow-remarriages; he tried to rehabilitate unwed mothers and uncared for women and so on. He thus undertook numerous activities of social reform. He also showed how fake were the phenomena of possession by ghosts. In the presence of big crowds he walked on fire and also exposed the fake character of many a miracle. The whole village of Mudunur hummed with atheist fervour. It acquired the name:

Godless village. Gora even held a big atheist conference there. He showed to the people that atheism is in fact a positive and a really meaningful way of life. He exhorted people to give up fatalism and live in self-reliant fashion. He also advocated a new type of decentralized and partyless democracy. Gora wrote numerous books and published periodicals to spread atheism.

In 1947, the Atheist Centre was shifted to Vijayawada. The Centre carried on undaunted various heterodox activities; but it also carried on numerous constructive type of activities. Because of all this the Centre became known all over the world. Persons from many European and American countries i.e., persons who were busy in reform of their respective societies, visited the Centre, lived there for months at a stretch. All of them were quite favourably impressed.

Gora was also favourably impressed by the simplicist philosophy of life of Gandhiji. Gora opposed all ornamental type of activities benefiting only a few persons leaving the large masses in misery. He wanted equality to prevail in all walks of life : economic, political and social. He was a thorough-going socialist, so much so that he even opposed flower gardening when some people are hungry. Instead of flowers he wanted people to grow vegetables. Whenever he was welcomed at public meetings, he would insist upon people to offer him vegetable garlands instead of flower garlands. Instead of growing flowers he wanted people to grow vegetables. To protest against the pompous ways of the ministers of the Government of India, he led an 1100 mile Foot March from Sewagram (Ashram of Gandhiji) to New Delhi during 1961-62.

The Bhoodana Movement of Vinoba Bhave started from Telangana. Through it, excess land was willingly transferred by the owners to the landless labourers. It acquired a huge momentum all over India. Vinoba carried on a pedestrian land collection march all over the country. Gora found this activity very much to his taste and he also threw himself wholeheartedly into the movement after 1955. Not only did he accompany Vinoba on this campaign but he did all that he could even independently on his own. He was also an active worker of the Sarvodaya

(upliftment of all) movement of the constructive workers believing in Gandhian ideology. He advocated the establishment of village republics all over India. He organized voluntary relief measures when there was famine in Andhra in 1960. He advocated economic equality among the citizens. He undertook other numerous concrete measures and campaigns towards bringing all-round awakening and upliftment in the area. In keeping with his stand that politics is a powerful method of transforming the society, Gora and his friends were active in political field; they even contested assembly elections. The philosophy and activities of the Atheist Centre spread to many more places. Even national and international Atheist conferences were held at the Atheist Centre in 1970 and 1972.

Gora was active till the very last moment of his life. On 26th July 1975 he died while he was addressing a public meeting. Gora was a unique combination of scholarship, vision and action. Apart from the vast and multifarious scholarship, he was a prolific writer and again, apart from the large scale movements like Sarvodaya, Bhoodan etc and apart from the original sociological, political, economic, anti-theistic, anti-religious, educational theories he propounded, he also undertook numerous concrete steps for an allround improvement of the people. He undertook adult education programmes, encouraged library-movement, fighting the queer beliefs and superstitions, fighting out the caste and religious distinctions and tensions and so on. On the top of it he was quite witty, was a good orator and was selfless and simple in his ways. He had even given up wearing a shirt. All these things created a huge welcome type of result for him and his cause.

Let us now see in brief the various dimensions of atheism as advocated by Gora. What we have to keep in mind is his central theme that a combined and cooperative action of all the rationalist and humanist associations actuated by the atheistic philosophy can create a world free from war, racial prejudice and economic disparities (World I : P 98) In his broadcast from Moscow he said: "Our aim is to create a new civilization. Ways may differ with place and people but the objective is the same : one world, one humanity and one peace "(World : II 26). Universal

brotherhood is possible only through atheism because theism and religion acquire a local and parochial outlook while atheism is truly universal in every way. People of one religion consider people of other religions to be their enemies ; only atheists can treat all people including the believers to be their equals and brothers. We can expect humane and affectionate type of relations only from the atheists and never from the theists. The atheists consider even theists to be human beings although the misguided ones.

* * * * * *

II
MAIN FEATURES OF POSITIVE ATHEISM

The greatest calamity of the present times is that man has lost faith in himself. And according to Gora, taking recourse to atheism is a pre-condition to regain that faith

Generally, atheism is taken only in its negative aspect. By atheism people generally mean denial of God's existence. In Gora's atheism, this negative aspect is, of course, there, but Gora attached to it a positive aspect also. Positively speaking, atheism means : freedom of man. Gora argues that when God is denied man automatically becomes a free being. Atheism thus is a liberating type of philosophy, liberating man from God.

One thing more. Gora's meaning of theism and atheism is also quite novel and peculiar. He found that those who accept God invariably surrender themselves before Him. Thus, the mentality of laying oneself prostrate, the attitude of mental slavery becomes the sine qua non of theism. Now Gora argues that although it is true that a theist is mentally a slave, it is better to say that whoever is mentally a slave is a theist. Hence, according to Gora, the term 'theist'depicts the person's mentality more than implying one's belief in the existence of God. Whoever considers himself a slave is a theist while whoever considers himself a free person is an atheist. Mental slaves are theists while free persons are atheists. Theists develop a slave mentality while the atheists develop an independent mentality. Gora writes, "Man's reactions to his world have been of two kinds; first, he surrenders to the forces of his world and drifts in the stream of its forces; second, he asserts himself upon the surroundings and harnesses the factors to satisfy his needs. The former is motivated by a slave mind and the other by his sense of freedom " (Positive : P 1). The first type of persons are theists while the second type are atheists. If some one thinks that he is a mere slave of circumstances, on Gora's criterion, he also is a theist irrespective of his disbelief in God. Naturally, the traditional lists of the theists and atheists have got to be revised. Under theism, Gora would include all

people of slave mentality whether they believe in God or not. Theism is not so much the belief in the existence of God, as man's subordination to something outside him. (Positive : P 4) Persons of independent mind are atheists. Under theism Gora would include all people of slave mentality even if they do not accept God. On this criterion, even the materialists become theists since they are determinists. Materialists believe that man is not free but is a slave of the laws of nature. Thus under materialism too man is a slave if not of God but of nature. But slave he surely is and is hence a theist. Materialism is godless theism. (Positive : P 4) Marxists too become theists in that they too are determinists believing that man is the slave of the dialectical process of history. Theism is thus of two types : One, where man considers himself a slave of God and the other where man considers himself a slave of circumstances. (Positive : P 5) For a meaningful, happy and progressive type of life atheism alone is the right foundation.

We have already seen that, according to Gora, persons who have risen above the tradition, persons who are of independent mind, persons who have initiated new outlook are atheists. On this criterion, Jesus Christ, prophet Mohammad, Guru Nanak and many others, although they believe in God, become atheists. (Positive : P 13) Even Gandhiji, although a known theist would, on Gora's criterion, be called an atheist. Has not Gandhiji given a new interpretation of so many traditional concepts ? In fact, has he not propounded a new philosophy of life ? Surely he has; therefore he is an atheist. Every prophet has been a heretic in his times; hence as compared to his contemporaries every prophet is an atheist. (Positive : P 13) Thus the term theism connotes a slave mind, a sheepish mind, whereas the term atheism connotes a free, an original and an independent mind. To be an atheist one must be bold and rational through and through.

According to Gora, man by nature is an atheist but his culture makes him a theist. Human nature is to ask questions but theism, tradition and religion suppress this innate human urge; they ask man not to question and doubt but to just believe, to keep faith, and that too an implicit faith. Circumstances and culture make persons theists. The young child is totally dependent upon

its elders it in fact, is eager to please them and naturally it does whatever the elders ask it to do, and believe in what they want it to believe. And gradually it becomes a theist, a mental slave. The child realizes that it is in its own interest to swim with the tradition and be a likeable child. We become theists just by being with the tradition; we do not have to think in order to be a theist. No sooner any one starts thinking, he will become an atheist. When Gora was once lecturing in the famous Hyde Park of London, one person asked him as to why so many people believed in God, if God did not exist, Gora's reply was : people are taught by their parents to believe in the existence of God and hence they just believe in God. "Think and God goes" (World : I 99) As soon as we start thinking God and theism vanish.

Gora was of the opinion that God is essentially the creation of a slave mind. Ancient people were ignorant about the happenings around them. They were surrounded by various hostile forces. Naturally men were scared, timid and credulous. They urgently needed security and a saviour. In such circumstances of total frustration, helplessness and ignorance the slavish people posited anthropomorphic deities behind the various phenomena. In the fond hope of getting security from them, the slavish people started laying themselves prostrate before the deities, praying to them and even worshipping them in an attempt to woo them for security, success and favours. As generations passed these people came to believe that the deities are the real saviours of men, and also that praying to them would set everything right. Faith in the existence and potency of God served the ancient people in many ways. God, although fictitious and created by men themselves, provided them with the final explanation of every thing, absolute security and heaven and immortality. If you wanted your wishes to be fulfilled, all that was necessary was to completely surrender to God, have complete faith in him and pray to him. How very silly.

The slave mind lacks originality, initiative and confidence. It rather enjoys in showing to the master as to how utterly nothing, how utterly worthless and how utterly dependent upon the master

it is. A person with slavish mind enjoys remaining a slave and does not wish to be free. His summum bonum consists in becoming a still greater slave. Once Gods were posited, numerous ways of worshipping them came up. They were passed on from one generation to the other in an increasingly enriched fashion. This is how religions were born. Gora found that "the essence of religion was man's surrender to God" (Positive : P 3) Slave minds enjoyed inventing the numerous advantages of being a slave. "Thy will be done" is the fitting description of the theist mentality.

The slave mind is in perpetual search of chances of prostrating before its master. As far as Gods were concerned, the ancient people forgot that they were human creations, were just imaginary and fictitious. The slave minds rather came to believe that Gods are the sole reality and the world false. As a result, the scheme of the real and the unreal gets inverted; what is real becomes false and what is false becomes real. In their zeal to please their lords. i.e, Gods, the slave minds not only make their own Gods and religion supreme but they also ridiculed the Gods, religions, beliefs and customs of the others. As a result, tensions, conflicts and even wars have become rampant in our life. Holy wars are not viewed with any sense of guilt and shame but are taken in a sense of pride. How every unfortunate from a rational point of view.

Gora wanted people to realize that Gods are all fictitious and that cultivation of atheist spirit alone can cure the evils in the world (Q : P 29) There are no Gods; man is free and master of his destiny. Man should give up his slave - stance and adopt the self-confident stance of the master. (Positive :P 5) Man must note that his wants can be fulfilled not through prayer to non-existing Gods but only through his own intelligent efforts. Anyone can understand that man will develop self-confidence only when he will understand that he is on his own since there is no God. (Q : P 15)

Look at what happens when you believe in a fictitious entity

like God. Anyone can claim God's sanction for his own brand of claims. Numerous evils get generated out of this situation of slave mentality and blind faith. He wrote, "The slave mind, contained in theistic faith, abetted inequality. By meek submission slaves permitted capitalists, autocrats and aristocrats to ride roughshod and made tyrants of their brothers. Tyrany does not end until slavery is abolished and slavery does not go until theism is abolished. (Positive :P 13). Struggle for egalitarian society, for social justice, for creating a welfare society becomes meaningful only after atheism is established. Therefore Gora says that progress of civilization is equivalent to progress of atheism."(Positive : P 14) In theist societies prayer is the only method of obtaining what you want. But in atheist society where science and technology are expected to dominate our life there is hardly any place for prayer and hardly any chance of worship being effective. (Positive : P 20).

I have stated in the beginning of this chapter that Gora's atheism is not limited to only denying God's existence but it also has a positive dimension. That Positive dimension is : man's freedom. Man is bound neither by God nor by Nature. Human actions are not determined by any external force; they are free. Gora opposes every type of determinism whether it is created by "divine dispensation, by fate's decree, by causation, by dialectics of development, by the forces of evolution or by historical necessity". (Positive : P 24) According to him, determination of any sort is as much a creation of mind as is God. Under determination of any sort man would not be a free being and hence would not be responsible for his actions. He would be just a slave and the term voluntary action would become a misnomer. But this is a completely false position and Gora does not accept it. Free-will is the day to day experience of every one of us (Q : P 25). Such a universal experience as human freedom cannot be brushed aside as illusion. Hence according to Gora, what is true is human freedom and what is false is determinism whether it is materialistic, naturalistic, circumstantial or theistic.

In keeping with his position of freedom, Gora goes to the extent of denying universality and inviolability to the laws of nature. His argument in this regard is as follows.

Through sense-organs we get knowledge of the world; but the organization and systematization of this knowledge, the interrelationships and laws of the data experienced are provided by the human mind. The position comes to be that man becomes the maker of the laws of nature. (Positive : P 31) Gora denies that laws of nature have any objective existence. He rejects the commonly held belief in the law of uniformity or the law of causation. (Positive : P 31) There are no causal chains. (Q:P 27). All laws are made by man. Any belief in the inviolability of laws would render human freedom impossible. But human freedom is a fact and hence, according to Gora, belief in the universal law of causation and so on is a false belief. Any one can see that human choices are uncaused choices, hence they are free choices. Men do not behave in an identical way as machines do. This goes to prove that causation as an inviolable fact does not reign supreme in the universe. The so-called laws of nature are man's contribution to the nature. All the so called laws of nature are in fact laws made by man while describing natural events. (Q : P 27). As regards the various laws of nature Gora says, "We are their authors. We make them, modify them at our will and need". (Q : P 27). He advises us to take causal relation in the sense of probability and not in the sense of universal certainty. (Positive : P 39). He says, causality is neither certain nor universal. (Positive :P 30) . This is so because the laws of nature are human formulations. Their present formulations have not been identical to their formulations in the past nor are formulations by persons at any given time been identical to those of each other. This is bound to be so because human mind does not work identically. Thus, the concept of laws of nature becomes a pure fiction. Moreover, Gora is of the opinion that the belief in inviolable and universal laws of nature as condensed in the law of universal causation would not only make free-will impossible but it will lead to fatalism. This will be very unfortunate. (Positive : P 29) But the fact of free-will clearly disproves the existence of causal or universal laws (Ibid.). The phenomenon of free-will itself disproves the existence of universal causation (Positive : P 30) According to Gora, free-will is literally a free will and is not a caused one (Q: 27) .

We have already noted Gora's advice that all laws of nature should be taken only in terms of probable behaviour of natural objects. They say that the natural phenomena are likely to behave in such and such a way. And yet Gora is sure of the fact that even in the sense of probability causal explanation of the events is potent enough to dispel superstitions and such other credulous phenomena. Moreover, Gora wants people not to get scared by the uncertainty in the behaviour of natural events. His opinion is that the atheists should boldly face the uncertainties in life.

Gora is of the opinion that the slave mind, in perpetual need of security, created a determinist world full of such laws as law of universal causation, uniformity of nature and so on. A determinist world is full of comforting imagery presided over by God, the most soothing fiction ever imagined. Belief in a law-governed universe is quite pleasing to the slave mind since it gives security to it. Gora said "Faith in determinism is the creation of a slave mind". (Positive : P 23). He admits that universe is mostly a chaos and not a cosmos. According to him, the very presence of millions and millions of free men is bound to make it a chaos. (Positive : P 36) Let us live in it in a spirit of adventure and self-confidence. Let us keep in our mind the fact that since the law governed universe is a false concept, the solace it gives is also a false solace. Therefore, let us not be sorry to lose it; in fact let us be glad of ridding it so that we get oriented to pursue some meaningful goals in life. The resultant loss of security caused by the rejection of a law-governed universe should rather inspire us to live a life based upon initiative and planning. (Positive : P 30)

Gora finds some more evils inherent in the theist world. He finds that since theism is based upon falsehoods like beliefs in the existence of God, soul, heaven, hell and so on, it invariably develops dishonest type of personalities. They will talk of equality but will tolerate inequalities under the belief that they are sanctioned by God. They will talk of paradise and live happily in dirt and misery ; they will talk of universal brotherhood but will wage internecine wars even in the very name of God, and they will describe world to be an illusion and yet will be found to be

passionately attached to it. More of this we will see when we will note Gora's views on God. At present we are noting only his views on positive atheism. He points out that theism cannot even have a morality in real sense, since in a theist world man is not a free agent at all and without freedom morality is not possible.

As against all this hypocrisy, atheism is a rebellion against mental slavery, against dishonesty and inequality. It is a movement to live a free and morally honest life. The atheist is morally honest and is self-disciplined by his own choice. Atheism treats the whole humanity as one unit. It does not recognize any distinction between man and man. Every reform must extend to the whole world. One must be sincere to his beliefs and put into action what one believes. Atheism is a philosophy of free, rational and sensible people. It believes that the events in this world are moulded by the free-wills of men. The direction of life is set by the ideal envisaged by men themselves, and not by the forces superior to the individuals (Q : 27). Only under atheism is real democracy possible. " History is the real growth of democracy where people live free and equal. (Q : 86).

And the reassuring thing is that atheism is increasing. Slave minds and vested interests are trying their best to stem its tide. Increase in sciences and scientific spirit are helping the increase of atheism. Free men will create the world of their choice. If there are mistakes, subsequent atheists would rectify the matters. This process will go on. The time at the disposal of man is infinite and hence the possibilities of improving the world on atheist lines are also infinite.

* * * * * *

III
EMPIRICISM

Gora, as an atheist, is bound to be an empiricist in his theory of knowledge. For obtaining true knowledge he adopts only the scientific method of investigation consisting of the following steps : observation (including experimentation), hypothesis -formation and verification. No doubt some of our empirical findings turn out to be false, yet this does not deter Gora from sticking to empiricism. As a consistent empiricist he holds that the possessors of the so-called absolute truth invariably become fanatics (Q : 62). Now, apart from this harmful effect, Gora is of the opinion that since empirical knowledge is infinite, any position at any time is bound to be only relative ; it is likely to be partial and even erroneous; but can always be improved. The improvement takes many forms like adding of new information or discovery of more details or removing the erroneous elements from our previous knowledge. Sometimes the subsequent knowledge may show as to how various information known to us until then can form some sort of a system. Yet one thing we ought never to forget i.e., when a subsequent experience improves the findings of the earlier experience, the subsequent experience is as much an empirical experience as the earlier one was. Subsequent experiences mostly improve the earlier ones and only very rarely negate them. Verification is the method of deciding the truth or falsity of our knowledge. Our beliefs must correspond to the objective facts shown in direct experience to us. Truth is a thought that stands the test of verification, (leam : 27) false thought fails such a test. What is disproved through verification is false and hence should be given up. But we should keep in mind the fact that even if some belief of ours is verified as true, it is not to be taken as an absolute truth. Any thing is true only until proved otherwise. Therefore, neither acceptance nor rejection of something is final. In the field of knowledge nothing is final. The atheist must always keep his mind open. (Q : 60) In fact, openness of mind is a healthy attitude necessary in each and every sphere of life. Open-mindedness leads to tolerance of the contrary opinions.

It is obvious that empirical approach rejects all transcendental entities like God, soul, deities, angels and the like, since they are by definition supposed to be suprasensible in nature. Gora does not want any thing to be accepted on faith, i.e. without proper investigation; such a practice leads to blind faith, fanaticism and what not. Gora contrasted nicely the positions of the empiricist and the religious people when he said, if the empiricist believes in what is true, the orthodox person accepts as true whatever he believes (Q : 23). This is how according to Gora, religious devotees suffer from several kinds of hallucinations (Positive P 20). Therefore he wants that every belief must be subjected to scientific verification. That some beliefs are useful is no proof of their being true. We must realise the distinction between truthfulness and usefulness (Positive : 22). On this count, Gora felt that things like rebirth, astrology and extra-sensory perception should not be accepted as true since they do not stand the scrutin of scientific investigation. (Positive : 22). The same is the case with palmistry, numerology, face-reading and miracle-mongering. Since men are free beings, any prediction about their future behaviour including gallup polls, is bound to be inexact.

An interesting comparison between theist and atheist attitude towards knowledge thus presents itself to us. The theists stop at their faith and enquire no more, while the atheists go on exploring and they find new truths. In the field of knowledge the theist stagnates while the atheist progresses; he conquers new areas and enriches his life. A closed mind is the sign of stagnation and ultimate death while the open mind is a sign of growth and life. (Positive : 28) Closed - mindedness is a sign of theistic mentality. Theists become fatalists and suffer while atheists progress, enrich themselves and enjoy.

Anyone can see for himself that, acceptance of unverified opinions and beliefs leads to tensions, clashes and religious wars. Hence according to Gora, relativism of truth and knowledge are the two foundations upon which atheism can build a strong and lasting social structure, and a happy and progressive structure too.

To say that the empiricist position is relative one does not mean that the atheist has no maxim of action or that he does not act at all. No, that is not the case. It only means that the atheist, although he will act upon some particular maxim of action believed to be true at the given moment, will give it up gladly when he finds it to be wrong. Additionally, he will also give empirical reasons to explain his position whatever it is, and will not resort to faith.

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IV
CRITIQUE OF PSUEDO - SPIRITUALISM

Of course it is expected that Gora rejects God. He was of the opinion that God is a falsehood which is responsible for keeping down the people in poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. (learn; G.S.Rao, Introduction, P - 5). He was of the opinion that God is not at all necessary for bolstering up our morality, confidence, security or anything else. God is also not necessary to explain anything be it any event in the world or even the world as such. The world, according to him, is self-existing and hence does not need a creator. When the cosmological argument stops at God as the uncreated creator of the world, such a stopping is just illegitimate. If it is argued that the world was created by God, it should be naturally asked as to who created God ? And if God is taken to be self-existing why not instead take the world to be self-existing? As regards the world being taken as a grand design of the omniscient God, the less said the better. Wolves live by killing lambs. This too is God's design. It can be asked: If God is kind to wolves, what about the poor lambs? And such is the case with many more species of living beings. Can the world with its calamities, disorders, conflicts, miseries, deficiencies and tensions, inequalities and exploitations, pain, disease and corruption, be called a grand design of the omnipotent, omniscient and a kind God ? No, not at all. (learn : P 33) Moreover, God, instead of becoming the guardian of morality, becomes its destroyer. Given God, morality becomes impossible for want of human freedom. God cannot be accepted on pragmatic grounds either. Being useful is something different from being ontologically real. Moreover, God cannot be accepted even on pragmatic grounds since the disadvantages caused by such acceptance far outweigh the advantages thereof. We have already seen all this in a previous section. Anyway Gora does not find any need of God for anything in our life.

According to Gora, God is the creation of a slave mind which is always in need of a prop. The ignorant, the scared, the timid and the slavish primitive minds created Gods. The fact that

even at present many people surrender to God completely only shows that these slavish people have not yet come out of the stage of primitive men. This is true even as regards some eminent scientists whose scientific outlook remains confined to their laboratories and in their life outside they are as much sentimental, emotional and even superstitious as many other people are (Q : 36). But clever theists cite them as illustrations to bolster their own case. The masses are given the impression that the scientists have as if found God in their laboratories. Gora wants us to keep in mind the fact that the scientists in laboratories are different persons from the persons out of their laboratories.

Gora's verdict about the existence of soul, heaven, hell, etc., is the same as it is about God. According to him, they are all false. To the scared mind the belief in the existence of an immortal soul serves the purpose of overcoming the fear of death. (Q : P 68). People prefer false solace to no solace. This is why belief in God, soul and immortality persists even to this date. It is likely to continue as long as the slave mind lasts. (Q : P 26). One of the chapters of Gora's book : *Atheism*' is - "God is man's weakness". God exists not as an objective fact but as a need of slave minds, very often, even now a mass phenomenon.

It will be of importance to note Gora's views about miracles. According to him, the so called miracles ascribed to this and that prophet just had not taken place at all. It is the disciples, who in order to make the prophet look grand, great and extra-ordinary, ascribe various miracles to him. The ascribed miracles raise the prophets so sky-high, that people start worshipping them and forget to do what they did. People start deifying the prophet and laying themselves prostrate before even the photos, idols and the other symbols of the prophet. Belief in miracles further strengthens the theistic mentality of surrender (Q : 19) The gullible masses are simply cheated by the tricksters in the guise of miracles. Gora wrote, "Where superstitions prevail, cheats exploit the gullibility of common people by presenting sleight of hand tricks, secret manipulations, chemical reactions and optic illusions as miracles, charms and amulets that constitute black-magic which defraud people". (Gora : *The need of Atheism*, P 27).

Gora tried to dispel certain misconceptions gathered around the words spiritual and spirit. These misconceptions have gathered around them since ages. Spirit is believed to be something different and opposed to matter. Spiritualism is the outcome of belief in God. Materialism is detested and spiritualism is praised like any thing. Materialism is considered to be consumerist, lowly and even an animal like way of life. Spiritualism has been associated with the noble, ascetic, higher and divine. It is even believed that spiritualism is associated with the matters of ultimate value, it is the pursuit of absolute reality, omniscience, absolute bliss, immortality, God, and the eternal values of truth, beauty and goodness. If we want that the spiritual pursuits should become successful, it was argued that we have to give-up the body and become pure spirits. Body was considered to be a prison-house of the soul, our real essence. Indians in order to derive solace even in their condition of foreign subjugation condemned the western civilization as materialist while claiming their own civilization to be spiritual, i.e., of a superior type. Gora is against the very dichotomy of spirit and matter. According to him, spirit does not exist away and apart from matter, i.e., the material body. In the same way, there is no transcendental existence like heaven away and apart from this terrestrial world. Naturally, there is no life after death (Q : 68) When we pursue the so-called spiritual goals, we only pursue the non-existing goals and waste our time and energy. This is why, Gora concluded that spiritualism is a bane of Indian life (World : I 38). Spiritualism asks us to look to God for every thing and the result is that we neglect man and the world. (World P : 39) Theism and the so called spiritualism make men fatalists in attitude. As a result, Gora told Gandhiji, "Man has become worse than the animal. Instead of living well he is dying ill. His strength to resist evil is very much weakened. The pleasures of the few are built upon the bones of the many. This philosophy of life based upon belief in God and fate - this theistic philosophy - I hold responsible for defeating our efforts at ethical life and idealism. The inequalities have been kept so far by the acquiescence of the mass of theists rather than by any force of arms". (Atheist : P 43) Under the name of spiritualism, Indians have created only poverty, illiteracy, fatalism, religious bigotry, mental slavery, dirt, slums, starvation,

beggary and untouchability, whileas the rational West has made huge strides in improving man and his surroundings. (World : 51, 77) Indians worship cows but treat the lower castes as untouchables. Gora is very critical of such a spiritualism, (World : 38 - 39) According to Gora, what is wanted is a constructive type of social work. Spiritualists normally gloat over the glorious (?) past and neglect the present and the future both. There is no God hence there are no God - written books called the holy scriptures. The so called sacred books are , in fact, written by human beings. The world is believed to be created by God and the same God is believed to be author of the scriptures. And yet it is quite strange that no scripture mentions the existence of America. Geography found in the scriptures is limited to the knowledge of the human beings who wrote the scriptures. Contents of the scriptures invariably have local colours. Scriptures will be up to date and useful only if their periodical revision goes on taking place. (World : 60) Whether sacred books or sacred institutions, according to Gora, they are all created by men. The outmoded values and rituals should also be periodically revised. Religious faith closes the minds of the people (Learn : 32) Naturally, the religious people can neither develop nor be up-to-date; they rather remain secluded and backward. (World : 83) Therefore, Gora wanted people to rise above the religious ways of thought and living.

Gora does not accept the escapist contention of the theists that God and religion are in themselves good, only that they have come to disrepute due to the misbehaviour of the believers. He was of the definite opinion that the theistic outlook is fundamentally defective and it is bound to corrupt social behaviour. The misdeeds of the theists are neither their whims nor are they forced by circumstances but are the direct consequences of their theistic beliefs. Thus the call for atheism is not out of disgust for the present conduct of the people who profess the theistic faith, but it is out of a desire for better way of life. (Atheist : P 36)

Gora was well aware of the fact that religion cannot be completely given up or banished from the world. Hence he wanted religion to be restricted to the personal life. It should be a personal

matter and not a public or a social one. (World : I 70; Q: 13). People should be looked at as human beings and not as persons belonging to this or that religion.

Gora realized that atheism is the urgent need of the times. He wrote, "The more I see, the more I see the need of atheism". (World : II 88). Atheism will make secularism safe. It will also make the world safe, harmonious and better. Egalitarian life is also possible only under atheism. Due to fast means of travel and communication, world is becoming smaller. Therefore, the attempt should always be that the welcome type of social changes should be spread over to the whole globe and not be restricted to this or that area or people (Q:34). It is only then that they will last and be effective. An open, uncompromising and sustained crusade of the atheist type has got to be carried on global scale (Q:33).

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V
SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Gora values individual human being in his own right. He is of the opinion that human individuals have intrinsic worth, which should be honoured and respected. Human individuals are conscious and free beings with sufficiently developed brain. Man has sufficiently developed cognitive powers also. Because of his developed rationality man has created societies, governments, religions, cultures, sciences, technologies, history and so on. Man is able to effect revolutions. There is nothing inevitable in the human world. Man's future will be as his ways at present are. Human history is not predetermined. Although man is a free being at birth, unfortunately most of the persons are reared in the theistic tradition and culture and ultimately become, mentally, slaves. They forget that they are free beings and start considering themselves mere tools in the hands of God, destiny, fate, nature, society, kings, circumstances or historical processes. They develop a sheepish type of slave mentality. In such circumstances Gora considered it a matter of primary importance to remind people that they are by their innate nature free and rational beings, and hence masters of their destiny. Atheist renaissance alone can accomplish it.

As regards the relation between the individual and society. Gora does not accept the organismic view where society is considered to be a living organism and the individual its small part; and then just as the part is for the body but not vice versa, so also the individual is believed to be for the society but not vice versa. Now Gora was of the opinion that such a view is wrong as well as unrealistic. Individual is a real entity, while the society or any other collectivity is only a fictitious entity. The individual has a consciousness of its own while the collectivity naturally lacks it. Apart and away from the individual constituents the collectivity has no existence of its own.(Positive : 33, 34) Hence it is the individuals who posses intrinsic worth and not the society. Therefore the society is and should be for the benefit of the individuals; society should serve as a means to serve the legitimate

purposes of the individuals. Gora wrote, "The shift from the collective to the individual restores to the individual his dignity which was belittled in the theistic understanding" (Positive : 36) Gora was of the opinion that neither Marx, because of his organismic view of society, nor Gandhiji, because of his theistic bias, did recognise the intrinsic worth of the individual. Hence neither of them realized the intrinsic revolutionary nature of individuals. (Gora:People and Progress Vijayawada, 1981. P 16) We should always remember the fact that Gora's social philosophy is based upon the innately free, rational, humanist and atheist nature of human beings. The peculiar rearing the child gets in his surroundings makes him slave, irrational, superstitious, inhuman, communal and a theist. The ideal social institutions should be such that the natural man grows to his full stature and moral eminence. Every individual, although he should be considerate to the society around, is not to submit to any injustice, discrimination perpetrated under this banner or that but must resist it and see to it that the matters are set right. Individuals are responsible for what they do and they should do the needful.

But there is an important detail to be noted here. While society (etc.) is a collectivity, individual human being should not be considered to be one more such a collectivity meaning thereby that the individual too is a collectivity of cells and parts; because cells or parts of human body do not have consciousness of their own; they are not free beings as individuals are. Therefore human individuals alone are the primary and real units of our concern.

An important point of Gora's atheism is that all human beings are equal and that no one is superior or inferior to others on the grounds of race, religion, birth, region, nation, language, caste or culture. All human beings should live as one family, one fraternity and as a huge cooperative. Atheism wants to create an egalitarian society of free, rational and moral human beings. Atheism wants that social justice, love and equality should prevail and naturally, privileges accrued on the basis of birth should be abolished. (Q : 72) Problems of poverty, shortages and misery are real problems which should be tackled on global basis (world I:87).

Gora is conscious of the problems created by population explosion and hence he did recommend family planning measures to curtail the growth of population. At the same time, he also recommended proper distribution of population. The whole world should be treated as one unit. The various distinctions and divisions of men are artificial, fictitious and harmful. Hence he advocated intermixing, inter-dining and inter-marrying so that one single humanity develops. He wanted to set an example himself and hence he married his children casteless.

In order to guard the freedom of the individual human beings right from the start, Gora advocated that the family should be a sort of loose organization and not the type of tight untrespassable sacred unit that it is at present. (Positive:P 59) Therefore he allowed freedom to individuals even in sex relations. Of course, according to him, the partners in sex should be mature individuals but the sex-relations should not be restricted to marriage. He believed in promiscuity with consent. There could be unwed motherhood too. His own daughter was one such. He permitted divorce to people who could not pull on together. He also advocated widow remarriages. All these reforms created huge uproar against Gora since the then society was traditional and orthodox. But he was undaunted. He was jeered, criticized and even attacked. But he carried on with his concept of atheistic reconstruction of the society.

Gora sincerely felt that if atheism is adopted by people in its proper spirit many types of social inequalities will automatically vanish. The social hierarchy in India called the Varna or the caste system is invoked on theistic grounds and is carried on shamelessly on religious sanctions. Now, if these theistic grounds and religious sanctions are abolished, the obnoxious caste-system would also go. Not only this, atheism can also be a good foundation for the emergence of one great family consisting of all human beings. Gora told Gandhi - "My method is atheism. I find that the atheistic outlook provides a favourable background for cosmopolitan practices. Acceptance of atheism at once pulls down caste and religious barriers between man and man. There is no longer a Hindu, a Muslim , or a Christian. All are human beings" (Atheist : P 34).

Religious identity of persons is revealed by the very names, surnames, obvious marks and the peculiar dress of the persons. Gora wanted to give up all such peculiar religious names, marks and symbols. We should all dress alike, look alike without reference to caste or religion and our names should be after some welcome historical events or after a flower, tree, river or some such objects, not calling up sectarian emotions. We have to get over not only castes and creeds but also nationalities and communities. Instead of aiming only at inter-communal harmony, Gora wanted us to aim at creating one humanity as a whole. If sectarian identities, whatever they may be, exist, they are bound to clash, sometime or other. Therefore, as a permanent solution of communal disharmony the only remedy is the creation of one big human family or community. Anything short of it is bound to be unsatisfactory. (Atheist : 51) Such talk as majority community and minority communitv loses all significance in a true atheist approach.

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VI
ATHEIST POLITICS

Atheism has its distinct stamp on the politics as viewed by Gora. Periyar wanted to keep his organization away from politics. He had his own reasons for adopting such a position. But despite those reasons, Gora feels that the atheists as such must take part in politics. For evolving proper social conditions, formation of proper policies and their proper implementation are very necessary. And of course, government machinery is the most suitable agency for that. (Positive : P 60) Gora was of the opinion that since the atheists themselves seek to destroy the religious sanctions for morality, new atheist sanctions must fill the void thus created. Efficient government is one such sanction and hence the needful has got to be done through evolving a proper governmental machinery. Political sanctions must fill up the vacuum created by the banishment of religious sanctions. (Positive:60). But Gora wants that the secular sanctions will be effective only if the administration is carried on atheist lines. Theists believed that the kings, nations, states and, in fact, every such thing was created by God. The subjects were the slaves and servants of the kings and the state. Kings are not answerable to the people. The subjects if they need any thing from the king they cannot demand it from him ; they can only pray for it and seek his favour. The king may or may not concede to their prayer; and he need not even give any reasons for his decision. The subjects were totally dependent upon the kings while the kings were absolutely independent. The dependence of the people upon the kings in theistic context was a one way relation. Now all this is reversed under atheism.

Atheism believes that man has created various institutions including the monarchy and the state. Naturally, citizens are the creators and masters of the governmental agencies, including the rulers. This is how atheism favours only democratic setups (Questions: 47,52) where the heads are elected by the people as their representatives. Here we should keep in mind one thing, i.e., according to Gora, democracy is not merely a form of political

government; even our economic and family setups must be democratic in structure and function. Democracy must become our state of mind. Political liberty, equality and development through peaceful means are the very foundations of democracy. In the economic field socialism is its inalienable friend. The two together are the panacea for human ills. Democracy gives great importance to individuals. Naturally Gora does feel that socialism and individualism should work hand in hand. He felt that real atheism can manifest only in democratic ways and the theistic mentality will always create dictatorships, since slave mentality is the very basis of theism. Democracy is based upon the principle of equality of people (Positive : 62). If people want something to be done by the ministers, i.e., by the government, they should just order the ministers to do that. But the theistic ethos prevailing in our society has spoiled even the democracy here. The common voters, the real masters, have become the slaves of their representatives (Positive: P 63). The elected rulers here become the autocratic despots; they become deaf and blind to what the people say. After casting their votes people become helpless. This must stop. Gora has made certain suggestions in this direction. We shall see them in brief. Many of these suggestions are similar to the ones given by M.N.Roy.

Gora does not want that politics should be carried on party lines. No. Party politics must stop. He advocates partyless democracy. In party politics party lines become hard and almost permanent. Party affiliations, like religious ones, mostly become even hereditary. In party politics party interests are always on the top. Even welfare activities are undertaken not so much for the benefit of the society as for the benefit of the party in power. Mutual animosity alone becomes the interrelation among the various parties. They do not cooperate even for a common cause like facing the natural calamities. And then, for all practical purposes party high-command becomes the all important factor. Even in the party hierarchy ordinary members are all powerless and the power gets more and more concentrated in the hands of the higher tiers. This is no democracy. In a meaningful democracy, the lower the tier the more powerful it ought to be. But party politics

defeats the very spirit of democracy. Parties become solely power-oriented. So much so that power grabbing becomes the sole activity, not only of each party, but even of the individuals within the parties. Except when it suits party interests common man and his welfare are not there in the party agenda. The common man can in no way make either the government or the party high command do what he wants. Hence, Gora feels that if we want societies and the government to function democratically, they must be partyless in character. Various political parties should spread their ideologies in the people, but the elections must be fought on partyless lines. They should be fought on individual basis. Naturally, there will be no party whips in the legislatures. Everyone must think freely. Political parties very often select candidates for election more for their utility to the party than for their qualities and abilities. Sometimes even bad characters and criminals are selected as candidates. Parties very many times even shield the misdeeds of their party members. At present, the elected representatives, represent the party interests more than representing the people and their interests. This is wrong. All this will be avoided if the elections are partyless in character (World I 14, II 79 ; see also Positive 66).

Next, there should be maximum decentralization of power and administration. (World I 14) The basic constituencies should be very small consisting only a few hundred voters.(Positive : 68). Each basic unit should elect one of its members to represent itself in the upper house. This upper house, in fact, every house in the pyramid of administration and legislation should be small enough so that the members know each other quite well. Every house will elect one of its members to represent itself in the upper house until the parliament, the apex body, is formed. Thus, we will have on the lines of pyramid basic houses, bloc houses, tehsil, district, regional, state and the national houses. Thereafter, there should also emerge a world parliament. (Positive : 68) Gora is an ardent advocate of one world where the distinctions of class, caste, creed, race, religion and nation will no longer be valid (World I 51) According to him whether it is nation or any other entity, they are all pure imaginations and fictions of human minds.(World : II 67)

They should not divide us. People should wander any where freely in an unrestricted way. Gora hopes that as people mix with each other more and more, the mutual distinctions will get blurred and common unifying points will emerge. (World: II, 20).

In the one world of Gora's concept men will be treated only as human beings and will be valued for their intrinsic worth. The maximum decentralization of power and wealth will make democracy meaningful in letter and spirit.

Of course the periodical elections temporarily prevent the rulers from becoming autocrats, arrogant and permanent rulers. Provision of recall of the representatives by their constituencies will also compel the representatives serve their electorate properly. Since the constituencies are small, the voters can at any time recall their erring representatives and elect new ones.

The mistakes committed in electing a wrong representative need not last up to the next election. This effective provision of recall of its representatives will keep the common man always governing. He will remain powerful even in between the elections. The lower house will remain always more powerful than the upper house. Under atheist set-up not even the elected parliament but the people are supreme. The voters will become the real masters and the elected representatives too will try more to keep the voters pleased than as at present keeping the high command pleased. In such circumstances holding of referendum on any controversial issue will also be easier.

Some more provisions/ instruments like : resorting to direct action, non-cooperation, non-payment of taxes, satyagraha, demonstrations, agitations, processions, strikes, propaganda, public meetings etc., will help the masses in keeping their representatives under control. The general voter must be politically alert. As a result of such arrangements government will function in a really democratic manner where the individual citizen is always the repository of the political power.

This in short is the outline of the atheistic politics advocated by Gora. He believed in politics which is free, just, honest, moral, truthful and is based upon the sovereignty of the individual.

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VII
ATHEIST ECONOMICS

Gora is quite aware of the important role of the goods in the process of people becoming and remaining good. If in political sphere he prefers partyless democracy to anything else, in the economic sphere he prefers socialism. We find that Gora's socialism steers clear of Marxism as well Gandhism although Gora is comparatively nearer to Gandhi than to Marx.

In Gora's opinion man is not stomach only, he is much more than that. That is to say, it is wrong to define man as only an economic being. He has brain and heart too; i.e. he is a rational as well as an instinctive animal. Moreover, all men are not alike. Naturally every individual is a special being valuable in himself and of all the things man is a free being. But surely the important role of the stomach for the proper functioning of the head and heart must also be kept in mind. And in this regard Gora does accept the important contribution of Marxism. But he feels that Marxism falls short on numerous counts.

Marxism is a determinist philosophy allowing no freedom to the individual human beings. Marx is a firm believer in the historical determinism caused by the dialectics of material forces. This dialectical process determines even the various stages of human development. Gora, on the other hand, rejects each and every type of determinism especially in the human sphere. According to him, determinism as a philosophy of human life is not only false, it is harmful too.

Abolition of private property and nationalisation of the means of production are some of the important features of Marxian economy. These provisions will make the individual citizens totally dependent upon the state thereby making the state dictatorial as well as totalitarian and then the individual citizens in Marxist societies will be slaves both theoretically as well as practically. In the phraseology of Gora these citizens will develop theistic i.e., slavish mentality. Even otherwise, in practice, Marxism had

developed into a religion, dogmatic and fanatic in approach, permitting neither questioning, nor doubting, nor even revising what Marx and Lenin had said. Man no longer remains a free being. Gora is very critical of the way the economy in socialist countries is functioning with its centralized planning, huge factories, gigantic machines and mass production leaving no initiative with the individual workers. All these factors will again reinforce the factors creating theistic mentality in the citizens in general. With denial of freedom to the individual the country will become a sort of a huge jail. No one and least of all Gora would accept such conditions to be satisfactory. No jail inmate is happy although his economic needs are securely met there. Thus the conclusion is that although Gora does want our economic needs to be fulfilled but he surely does not want them to be fulfilled on Marxian lines. Gora too wants to loosen the ties of private property (Positive : P 59) but he does not advocate its complete abolition as it is advocated by Marx. Under Marxism State becomes the sole repository of power, wealth, planning, resources and even of morality. Gora wants people to develop revolutionary spirit which is neither envisaged, nor allowed nor even possible in Marxist ideology and practice. Gora proposes a decentralized economy; he opposes concentration of power and wealth whether it is in the hands of private individuals or in the hands of the State. (Positive : 90) Gora's primary aim is to safeguard the individual freedom. Morality, too according to him, is possible only if the moral agent is a free agent. All this is taken care of in the atheist philosophy propounded by Gora. Hence, he always said that atheism is better than Marxism. (Positive : 83).

As far as economic field is concerned, Gandhism is supposed to be the anti-climax of Marxism. If Marxism encourages industrialization, Gandhism opposes it. Gandhi seems to oppose every thing modern. Gandhi too wanted equality to be brought in the economic field but this he wanted to be brought around through self-reliance, through village autonomy, through simplicity of life and through developing in the rich people a sense of trusteeship. The rich people should hold their excess wealth as if it belongs to a trust meant for the welfare of the have-nots. The rich people should consider themselves to be trustees of the well being of the

poor masses in general. But Gora has his own objections to the very basic assumptions of Gandhian economy. Gandhi gave a religious, theistic touch to every thing. Gora felt that such theistic assumptions instead of making people work for equality would only encourage slavery in them. (Positive : 76). Moreover, he was of the opinion that since God is non-existent, the structure built on such a non-existent foundation would neither last long nor would it work. It is bound to fail. And as any one can see it has failed. Even during Gandhi's own life-time hardly a couple of rich people behaved as trustees in the aforesaid manner. After Gandhi's death no one is living in that way. What Gora feels is that Gandhism lacks sanctions to materialize its own objectives. Moreover, Gora did not agree with the ideology of developing austere ways of life. His opinion was that austerity in itself is not a virtue. On the other hand, he felt that one of the signs of progress is increasing the human needs and then satisfying them in a modern way (Q:P 56)

Gora's above suggestion is likely to be misunderstood unless a few more of his suggestions are kept in mind. In our endeavours we should never swerve from the principles of morality, equality and universality.

Gora opposes the very idea that wants of only a few rich people should be increased and fulfilled leaving the general masses in poverty, misery and disease. According to him, every increase of economic level must be on a universal scale. He had led an 1100 miles long pedestrian march from Sewagram to New Delhi in protest against the pompous life-style of the ministers of the government of India, especially while the general masses were living in conditions of below the poverty line. As far as austere way of life was concerned he wanted that the members of Legislatures, Parliament and other public figures should show the way. In their personal lives they must represent the economic level of the masses. The elected representatives should mirror the political as well as the economic state of the country. He always felt that poverty must be eradicated and for this a comprehensive, long-lasting strategy and sustained campaign are necessary. Mere wishful thinking will not do. A true atheist would

not leave the matters to God or to a drift. He would start doing the needful. It must be always kept in mind that poverty anywhere endangers the security every where. (World II : 58) Each economic progress and every other progress must be on a global scale. He advocated ceilings on property owned by persons, whether in rural or in urban areas.

A true atheist would not tolerate inequalities. He would not leave matters to God and fate. He would rather start doing what he thinks needful. Theism being fatalist in nature tolerates inequalities, atheism does not, cannot. He described the underdeveloped countries to be the slums of the world which need large scale development. Gora is of the definite opinion that the West has progressed solely because of atheism and realism. (Q : 41) Gora was against the scene of peaks (luxuries) and valleys (miseries) in economic sphere. He wanted near equality to prevail everywhere. He could not tolerate the sight of the rich few persons rolling in luxury when millions were languishing in misery. Primary needs of the masses must be first fulfilled, then alone we should think of comforts and aesthetic matters. In this direction he even opposed the growing of flowers as long as there were unfed hungry people in the world. Instead of flower gardens Gora advised people to cultivate vegetable gardens so that the vegetables satisfy the hunger of the needy people.

At receptions he accepted only vegetables garlands and not the flower ones. He even organized a public campaign to uproot the flower-beds of the state government's public parks in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. As can be expected, he was jailed for this. Anyway, this shows the nature of the economic thought of Gora.

Although Gora agreed with Gandhi on some matters, he did not agree with the theism of Gandhi. He also did not think Gandhi's doctrine of trusteeship as a workable hypothesis. Yet he agreed with Gandhi's plans of developing small scale industries in villages, developing village co-operatives, formation from below the economic plan of the society, self-reliance of individuals, self-sufficient villages and so on. But Gora advocated the use of small

machines to increase human efficiency and minimise monotony. He was of the opinion that small establishments generate cooperation and informality in the workers. Small machines will not only retain the freedom of the individual but will also avoid the evils of unemployment and exploitation. (Positive : 81). Gora warned people of the danger of drug addiction coming up as the fillers of the leisure provided by the use of machines. We must fill up our leisure with socially useful activities, and not with the pursuit of shallow thrills (World II : 48). Avoiding the pollution of various sorts and rational use of natural resources are of course implied in the above suggestions of Gora.

Gora wanted that we in our social life should attempt to realize the humanist values of equality and socialism. For the implementation of this, he was of the opinion that the governmental machinery is the best medium, (Positive : 81) because the government has in its hands numerous type of powers: administrative, judiciary, police, military, media of mass communication, education and so on. According to Gora, the government is the servant of the people and the people should order the government to do what they feel right in the largest interest of the people. (Positive : P 82) Alert public is what is necessary and Gora hope that proper upbringing in atheism would do the needful.

When we will be sufficiently alert and reasonable we will elect the government of our choice and then through various sanctions like satyagraha (emphasis upon truth), non-violent non-cooperation and so on compel it to implement the desires of the people. (Positive : 82) Every individual must take the necessary initiative to create an enlightened life.

Gora was against wide-spread charity since it creates large scale beggary, may be sometimes under dignified banner, as an institution. He also felt that too much security for the individuals disturbs the family harmony. Social security should be there but it should not create idleness and parasitism. Yet the social set up should be such where a sensible person with initiative would not starve. He hoped that if basic needs of people are reasonably

satisfied such crimes as thefts and corruption would fall down to negligible level. (Q : 73-74) Then it may even be possible that the majority of the people will engage themselves in creative and constructive type of activities, activities that will improve the qualitative dimension of our personality and society. People should not be valued for what they have and consume but for what they do for the society (World I : 61) He always felt that welcome type of impersonal and long-lasting considerations ought to move people more often than the economic, personal and short-term considerations. (Learn : 29, World II : 71) Gora wanted people to cherish the ideal of real socialistic equality in economic matters. He was always of the opinion that, "the foremost need of social life is the establishment of equality" (Q: 56). He found an unfortunate mentality even among the have-nots that when they agitate for economic reforms their objective is to be rich more than to be equal with the others. Suppose a poor person suddenly finds riches either through lottery or through sports or a chance find, he would refuse to share these riches with the other unfortunate poor persons. Hence, Gora felt that most of the poor persons are really capitalist in their mentality although they currently belong to a poor class. (Q: P 80) Their aim is to be individually rich and not to create an egalitarian society. That is why Gora wanted people to aim at equality, the real socialist value. (Positive : 80) Capitalist, according to Gora, is a person who aims at acquiring private property not caring for where and how the neighbours are. (Q: P 46) A poor person with capitalist mentality will hot hesitate to adopt even corrupt means to become rich; he may adopt even anti-social means to become rich. (Positive : 47) Gora felt that a person with real socialist spirit will tolerate neither inequality nor immorality, nor even irrationality. A person with true atheistic spirit will make others as much comfortable and happy as he himself is. He may go even a step further; he may even sacrifice his own comforts and happiness to make others happy as does a father to make his children happy. A person who refuses to share his own comforts among others is irrational, self-centred and selfish. He loses sight of the infinite future possibilities of equally high standards for all. (Positive : 93).

Gora envisaged that the atheist economic planning will be carried out in various tiers. The lowermost primary tiers will initiate the plans containing their primary needs and the possible methods of their satisfaction. The upper tiers will consolidate the plans that come from below, coordinate the efforts to implement them and also cater for wider needs like communication, research etc. (Positive : 85). Creation of social consciousness is necessary for the realization of freedom, self-sufficiency and for avoiding unemployment and exploitation. Gora's economics replaces Gandhi's benevolent capitalism as well as the Marxist dictatorial measures with true socialistic, democratic cooperation (Positive; 91)

The above are the main features of Gora's atheist economy. If implemented they ensure the creation of a truly socialistic world in atheist sense.

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VIII
ATHEIST MORALITY

Moral relations can be seen only in social life, i.e. when a person interacts with others, and with his habitat. Gora always felt that cruelty to animals is to be as much avoided as cruelty to fellow beings. So too reckless use of natural resources should also be avoided. He was of the definite opinion that real morality can be only global in nature and not sectarian. But with religious morality the case is different. Not social relations but the other worldly salvation becomes the basis of religious morality. (Positive: 50). This is wrong. Atheist morality is rational, global as well as mundane.

Theists, in their ignorance about the atheist position, level queer charges against atheist morality. They feel that fear of God is necessary for man's remaining moral. But since atheists do not accept God, this sanction of morality is non-existent in their case. Hence they allege that the atheists will all be immoral. Moreover, if at all there exists any morality in the atheists it will just be an animal morality advocating : eat, drink and be merry. Gora pointed out that these are all groundless allegations and imaginary fears. On the other hand, he held that it is the theists who can have no morality worth its name while atheist morality is true as well as a lofty morality. Let us see all this in a bit more detail.

Gora pointed out that if God is accepted human freedom becomes impossible and without freedom morality is impossible. If God is accepted morality becomes impossible. But is it important to note that Gora held morality to be impossible even in materialistic context since the materialists also believe in determinism thus denying freedom to man.

According to Gora, human freedom is a fact observable by anyone. Hence, the materialist determinism as well as the theistic pre-determinism is all false. Gora opposed every type of determinism. (Positive : 58) The atheist morality is a real morality, because it is based upon human freedom which is a universal,

undeniable fact. He also questioned the propriety of non-existent God working as a sanction of morality. Gradually even the believers become progressively less afraid of God as a moral sanction. This is what we are already seeing in the world. Bad people are hardly afraid of God's punishment. Hence Gora advocated a real type of morality with real and observable mundane sanctions(Q: 17). According to him the following can be some of sanctions for people remaining moral: satyagraha, reasoning, rewards and punishment, praise and blame, and examples of good people; creation of a general healthy moral ethos will also go a long way in rearing the children in proper moral institutions. Gora always believed that a reasonable person cannot be immoral. Hence he had high hopes from the general intellectual awakening.

One thing more about God becoming the sanction of morality. People have their own varying concepts of God and His commands. This naturally prevents emergence of a universal morality. This is how we find religious moralities to be local, sectional, tribal, fanatic, ritualistic and dogmatic. Moreover, since God is a falsehood the morality based upon God is bound to be full of falsehoods. Very many times it is queer, obscurant and even cruel. As misfortune would have it, religions even sanction slavery, untouchability, inequality and war. Then again, Gora's main objection is not to be overlooked i.e., theism as such creates slave minds, the most objectionable thing. It praises poverty and misery. Sooner or later the theist morality is bound to fail. Gora hence says : atheism succeeds where theism has failed (Q: 18) Moreover, even according to the theists, morality is no passport to heaven; only God's grace is.

For developing the feeling of universal brotherhood in men, Gora did not feel that positing of God is in anyway necessary. This sense of universal brotherhood can be created even on empirical basis. Human folly has created various divisions among men but the divisions and distinctions are all fictitious in nature. Distinctions based upon language, religion, tribe, nation, region and race are all man-made distinctions. These should not be allowed to ruin human unity. If we care to observe, any one can

note that men as such have more points in common than uncommon. It should be driven home that in our own rational self-interest we should treat every human being as our brother (Q; 15) . Moreover, Gora found that positing of a divine father has not created the desired effect. Despite the orthodox teachings going on for thousands of years, hate and wars still rule our life. (Q:14) People very often fight in the name of God. Moreover, people quite often forget the brother and they get riveted only to the father, the God. (Q: 62). If the divine father is not posited at all then such a position would not arise. Acceptance of God leads to forgetting of man and also the world. Religions hardly ever ask people to improve the world; in fact, you are asked to shun it let alone improve it. In religions God is always more important and more coveted than the brother (Q: 76).

It is very often argued that morality is an essential part of religion, that being moral is a necessary step of being religious and earning heaven. Nowadays, the orthodoxy is declaring that improving the world is included in the religions themselves. But Gora pointed out that this claim does not hold good in our day to day life. For example, no religion has any plan to improve the economy, agriculture, commerce, education, media of communication and transport, banking, roads, ecology and so on. They never think of bringing down the pollution of water and air. They have no plans to prevent concentration of wealth and power. Hence it is false to say that the religions also try to improve the world. It is wrong to expect social improvement from a religious setup. Let alone improving the world, the devotee, the more his devotion intensifies the more he withdraws from the world. We cannot expect social improvements from such persons. Earning heaven on the basis of living a morally good life is comparatively far more difficult than earning it through such easy ways as worships, prayers, rituals, rosaries, pilgrimages, charity, fasting, meditation, purchase of indulgences and so on. (Positive: 52) As a result, persons choose the easier alternatives of realising God and forget morality and society both (Question : 76, 40). Gora asked: can we expect morality to improve when morally corrupt devotees of God, by way of appeasing him, offer him a portion of their plunder and thank him for the in success in plunder ?

Religious morality gets vitiated right from the start since it is based upon the falsehood of God's existence. Since God and the other spiritual entities are unverifiable, the cunning priests cheat the gullible people in the very name of God. (Q: 17). This is why in the theist societies the dishonest people prosper while the honest people suffer. (Q : 17)

According to Gora, the theist morality is harmful from one more point of view. It is prescriptive in nature. People are expected to just obey what is being ordered; no doubting, no questioning. The prescription again is so very detailed that people find clear orders as to what is to be done when. Hence again the believers do not have to scratch their heads for anything. Gora felt that such a habit when observed for years and years, kills the intellectual initiative. Rationality is the very essence of human beings. As far as instincts, impulses and reflexes is concerned there is much that is common between man and the animals. What differentiates man from animals is his rationality, the questioning spirit and the search for more knowledge. When this rationality is curbed not only on individual level but even on social scale and that too over thousands of years, will not the very soul of man, the rationality, get finally stifled ? It will definitely be. Even if there are some gains from the theistic morality, they are very meagre but the loss is colossal. This is nothing but being penny wise and pound foolish (World II : 65)

God is very often depicted as a kind person and the forgiver of sins. No one has seen God punishing a culprit and then if there is an advance proclamation that the sins will be pardoned, why will people shirk from committing sins ? Looking at all the abovesaid factors, Gora concluded that real morality is possible only when people become atheists.

One of the implications of being an atheist is to be moral. According to Gora, morality is a social necessity (Q : 17). He gave so much importance to morality that he used to say: immorality anywhere is a danger to people everywhere. (Q: 17). The innate human rationality will be our guiding factor. If rationality prevails, morality too will prevail. The atheist morality will be

universal in nature and not local or sectional. An atheist cannot be truly happy as long as there is misery of any sort anywhere. (Q: 14) This thing is applicable to rich individuals as well as to rich countries. With their eyes open they too cannot be really happy when there is poverty and misery rampant in four-fifths of the world. Atheism is universal in nature whereas, as we have seen above, theism, practically speaking, becomes local and sectarian. Being sectarian sometimes it becomes cruel especially when it comes to dealing with the out- groups. Theists hence try to keep the out-groups deliberately poor, superstitious, illiterate, fatalist and so on. But atheism believes in globalism, equality and democracy. It wants atheist enlightenment to spread in the poor as well as in the rich. True atheism will cure the rich of their sectarianism, and immorality and at the same time it will rid the poor people of their illiteracy, poverty, superstitions, slave mentality and so on. (Q: 42).

Thus atheist morality has varying tasks to achieve depending upon the local situation.

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IX
ATHEIST CENTRE IN THE POST GORA PERIOD

Very ofte. , the revolutionary activities started by a revolutionary person dwindle down after the demise of the revolutionary person or they become mere rituals as it has become with the spinning programme of Gandhi. But the case is just the opposite with the Atheist Centre and its activities started by Gora. Under the supervision of Mrs. Saraswathi Gora, Gora's wife, it has become the hub of activities meant for promoting humanism, atheism and social change. The Atheist Centre is busy with the secular type of social work including comprehensive rural development. It is developing an alternate way of life based upon secular and humanist outlook. Attitude of positive atheism and atheistic humanism, of course, are the spur of all that happens in and through the Atheist Centre. Life is an integrated whole and hence in addition to the activities started by Gora, the Centre has undertaken numerous activities touching all the spheres of life. Here are the prominent ones among them.

Counselling - The centre provides socio-psychological counselling to persons facing various types of problems like marital disorder, parent-children tensions, family problems, problems of dowry, desertion, destitution, sex discrimination, unwed motherhood, etc. It also provides the necessary support and encouragement when people rise about the caste barriers and marry inter-caste.

Removal of untouchability and caste-distinctions surely form an important activity of the Centre. Interdining programmes are held and inter-caste and casteless marriages encouraged. It also encourages inter-religious marriages.

The Centre has carried on a sustained campaign against child marriages. It has organized widow remarriages and encouraged and got married Devadasis. The Centre has helped some prostitutes to come out of the clutches of anti-social elements

and also helped them to get married, thereby conferring normal status to them in the society.

Fight against superstitions is, of course, an important item on the agenda of the Centre. To this end, the centre has taken up programmes for inculcating scientific temper and rational thinking in the society. It has also undertaken programmes for exposing the fake character of miracles. Along with this, it also tries to remove witchcraft and sorcery.

A permanent science exhibition has been set up by the Centre. It undertakes, from time to time, programmes to educate people and ushering in awareness.

With a view to spread environmental consciousness and ecological concern the Centre undertakes various programmes necessary for this. It organizes environment exhibitions to this end. A science march was undertaken in 1992, covering one hundred villages. The Indian government supported the Centre in this activity of the Centre. The Centre has organized peace marches whenever peace is disturbed by inter-communal disturbances. Adult education and women's education are an important activity of the Centre.

Sex education and family planning is carried on by the Centre. Towards this end the Centre publishes / gets articles and books published. Health education is also imparted. Small family norm is encouraged by the Centre. In the matters of rural reconstruction the Centre also cooperates with other non-governmental organizations, especially the ones devoted to Gandhian and secular ideology.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, the Atheist centre is carrying on comprehensive rural development programmes through its three agencies : Arthik Samata Mandal (Association for economic equality) Vasavya Mahila Mandal (Reality, social outlook and development of individual personality) and Samskar (Reform)

Through Arthik Samata Mandal, a comprehensive rural development programme covers health, education, mother and child care, *balawadis*, polio corrective surgeries, rural eye camps, health education complexes, wasteland development, community organization, poverty alleviation programmes and support to the artisans. As a result of its efforts eyesight has been restored to hundreds of people through cataract operations.

Vasavya Mahila Mandali runs a working women's hostel and also a home for women with social problems. Again, a broad spectrum of activities for development are undertaken. Women are trained for social work. Clean drinking water is being provided to people in a number of villages. Alcoholism and drug addiction are being combated. Counselling is also provided to street children and needy women and attempts are made for their rehabilitation. A Swetcha Gora Eye Bank is also there. It also runs a full-fledged well equipped hospital catering for the treatment of the needy and the down-trodden.

Through Samskar the Centre carries on the work of reformation and rehabilitation among ex-criminal tribes and denotified tribes. Efforts are undertaken to bring the criminals into the mainstream of society. Rehabilitation of the erstwhile Jogins (depressed class women forced into sexual relationships with respective villagers in the name of God) is intensively undertaken in hundreds of villages.

In addition to the above activities, the Centre also promotes development of secular art and culture. An attempt is made to imbibe humanist values especially among the children.

The Centre has a publication wing also. An English and a Telugu monthly respectively called *Atheist* and *Nasthika Margam* are regularly published. Numerous pamphlets, booklets and books spreading the message of atheism are published in large numbers.

The Centre also holds a number of lectures, seminars and conferences on national and international level to spread the true atheist spirit. Not only do people, celebrities included, belonging

to various states of India and people from foreign countries visit the Centre and get the atheist temper imbibed. The top workers of the Centre also undertake extensive tours inside and outside the country to propagate atheism.

Jai Insaan *(Victory to the human)* is the motto of the Centre. It speaks a lot and covers a lot.

Numerous and prestigious awards have been showered upon the Centre by way of recognition of its constructive contributions. To cite only a few of them —

At the World Humanist Congress held in Oslo in 1986 the Centre was given the International Humanist Award.

Atheist of the Decade Award, was awarded to Sri Lavanam (Gora's son) in 1991. His wife, Mrs. Hemalata Lavanam was honoured by the Andhra Pradesh government as an outstanding social worker ; Potti Sriramulu University also gave her an award for promoting rationalism. Other members of the Centre also received awards for their contribution to social change, humanism, atheism and social reform.

Mrs. Saraswathi Gora was awarded a number of national awards - the *Malladi Subbamma Award, Challagalla* Award, Kasinathuni Nageshwara Rao's Memorial 'Viswadata' Award and the Tripuraneni Ramaswami Award. She was also awarded the Janki Devi Bajaj Award in 1997, the Jamnalal Bajaj National Award in 1999, the Basava National Award in 2000 and the prestigious G.S. Birla International Award for promotion of Humanism in 2000.

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X
CONCLUSION

Dr. Sunanda Shet has written a well studied biography of Gora (Published by B. Premanand, Podnur, Tamilnadu, 2000). While assessing Gora's work she has the following to say. His activities towards social upliftment, widow remarriages, inter-dining, inter-caste marriages, cause for the unwed mothers, anti-dowry, anti-ornaments, abolition of untouchability, ex-criminal tribe rehabilitation, promoting adult education, educating socially backward sections of society, advocating austere ways of life, truthfulness, purity of means, promotion of Hindi, Bhoodan, and so on, could not fetch him much credit because of his association with Gandhi, Vinoba and Sarvodaya. Secondly, his atheism and liberal views on sex took away whatever good-will he may have otherwise earned. All in all, he is not remembered by many. She says, "Thus deprived of mass support and social base, denied of political support and patronage, lacking in organizational support, Gora's dedicated and life-long selfless service to social reform has gone unrecognised and unappreciated in history". (P : 161). Now what Dr Shet says may be true but what I feel is that the value of a new thought and that too an anti-establishment thought is not to be judged by its only immediate effects; it is to be judged by its long term effects. And the coming days are bound to prove Gora right in many respects. He equated theism with slave mentality and atheism with free-will and then who can deny that all the progress in the history is made by free-thinking and that the progress has always be retarded by slave minds ? (Atheist : P 55) We should always keep in mind, and this is to be found in history, the fact that a revolutionary thought is bound to be opposed by the established agencies : religion, state and even the majority of the people, Socrates, Bertrand Russell and many more heretical people were all punished by the establishment for their views. And yet any one can see that atheism is definitely increasing.

As Mr. K. Veeramani, General Secretary of Dravidar Kazhagam, said in his welcome address to the Fourth World Atheist Conference at Vijayawada, Jan. 4-6-1996, " Every atheist

today is a potential liberator of humanity from the shackles of injustice, inequality, superstition, maladjustment with fellow-beings, wastage of money, time and energy, and lack of reasoning power and freedom of expression". Atheism is bound to create a sane society.

Lavanam, Gora's son has very nicely noted the changes in the beliefs and ways of people in this regard. In *the Atheist World* (A Quarterly No. 1, Jan. 1999 P 12) he writes :-

"The shift from theism to atheism is taking place gradually in four phases :

(i) Practicing Theists : They fully believe in god and follow the religious practices.

(ii) Non-Practicing Theists : Even though they have belief in god and religion, they have doubts about the efficacy and utility of religious dogmas. Hence, in practice, they have discarded many of the religious practices. But still they have belief in religion and God out of habit; and customarily and mechanically they follow the religious practices. They are, in other words, sympathizers with theism.

(iii) Non-Practicing Atheists : They may not follow atheism fully, but they have developed an outlook and also the inquisitiveness in search of truth. Hence, they are atheist sympathizers.

(iv) Practicing Atheists : They propagate atheism as a positive way of life and as an alternative to religion. They put atheism into practice, knowing that God is man's creation and that the social setup based on religion is crumbling".

Although all the four categories will always remain yet history has shown that formerly the graph from (i) to (iv) was going down steeply. But now, the tilt in reverse direction has already started. All the present grounds show that this tilt will continue in future too. Probably the tilt will gather more speed and momentum.

People genera y think that atheism is equivalent to immora ity and lawlessness. Gora s and subsequently the Athe st Centre's teachings and ways d s llus on us complete y of this wrong impression and prove to the hi t that atheism is an alternate and a positive way of life, a way of life which is comprehens ve in nature, is modern, is rea istic, is morally ennobling, cal ng for very h gh degree of intellectual enlightenment and spiritual liberation. Truly Atheism is sure y the need of the hour and a so the hope of the future.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

D D Bandiste was born in Maharashtra in 1923 He was educated in various provinces and universities of India: Matriculation (Maharashtra) Intermediate (Andhra University) B A with Honours in Philosophy (Guwahati University) MA (Philosophy), MA (Psychology) LL B (Banaras Hindu University) and Ph D. (Sagar University) The topic of his Ph D research was "The Ethics of Bertrand Russell"

After teaching philosophy in various colleges affiliated to various universities he retired in 1981, as Professor of Philosophy, Govt Arts & Commerce College, Indore (M P)

Apart from some research papers, some individual chapters in the books edited by others some talks on philosophical topics on the A R, and some scripts for the AVRC, his following books have been published:

- Beyond God and Religion
- Subodh Samkhya Darshan (Marathi)
- Bharateeya Darshanik Nibandh (Ed Hindi)
- Devatma Ka Neetishastra (Translation : Hindi)
- Manavendra Nath Roy (Marathi)
- Nava Manav Vaada (Hindi)
- The Ethics of Bertrand Russel
- New Humanism
- Understanding Rationalism
- Andhavishwas Niwarana (Hindi)
- Humanist Values: A Source Book
- Humanist Thought in Contemporary India
- Philosophical Semicolons (Under Preparation)

He still attends various philosophical meets His main interests are Rationalism and Humanism. He delivered the special endowment K M Hay lecture in Humanism at the World Philosophical Congress, New Delhi, 2000-2001. He was interviewed by the B B C (Belfast, U K) in August 2000 for his views on religion.

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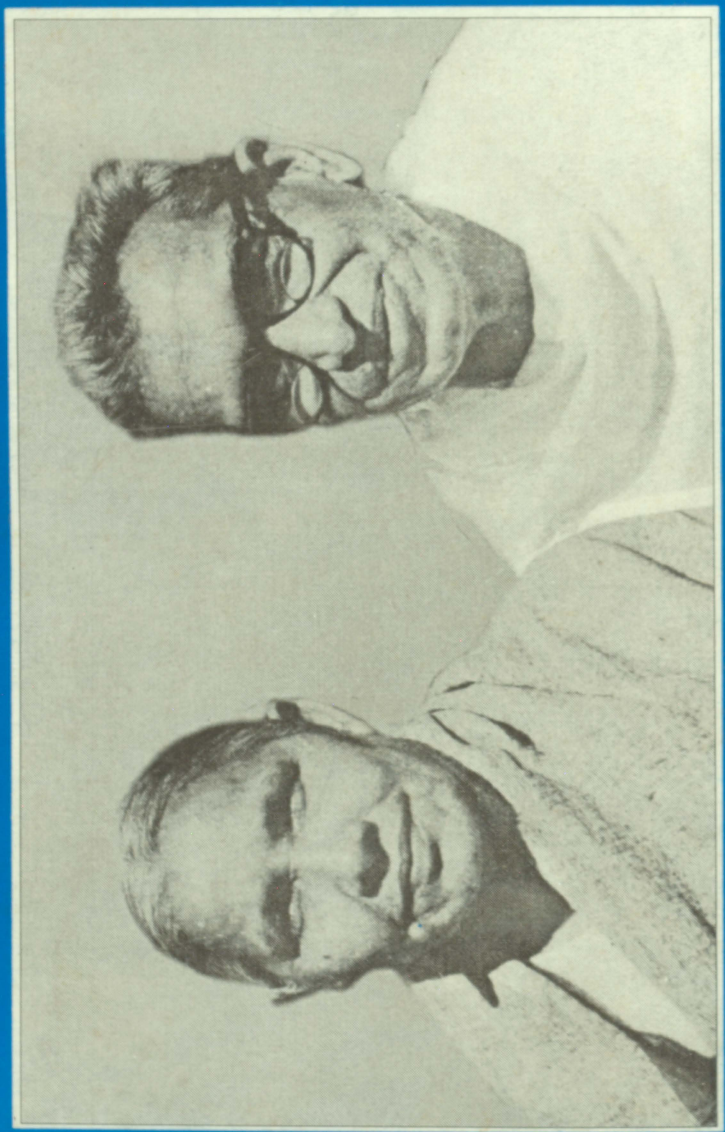

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